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ABSTRACT

This collection of papers represents an effort by their writers as a group to develop a multicultural perspective to be used in exploring educational and other issues in diverse contexts. The nine papers include: (1) "Culture, Schooling, and Education in a Democracy" by Victoria R. Fu; (2) "Diversity in America: Historical, Social, and Political Context" by Diane V. Roberts and others (to which is appended a list of historical milestones of multiculturalism); (3) "Responsive Teaching: A Culturally Appropriate Approach" by Andrew J. Stremmel; (4) "Family Diversity and Multicultural Education: Changing Characteristics of Postmodern Families" by Katherine R. Allen; (5) "Weaving Multiculturalism into the Fabric of the Community" by Karen B. DeBord; (6) "Including the Young Child's Emotional Heritage on the Agenda of Multicultural Education" by Mary Cherian; (7) "Multicultural Education in Any Classroom" by T. J. Stone; (8) "Reflections on Multicultural Education" by Janet K. Sawyers; and (9) "Nobody Said It Would Be Easy!" by Ann J. Francis. This last paper discusses some of the difficulties of implementing multicultural education in the classroom and the society. Six of the papers provide reference lists. (BC)

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Exploring Multicultural Education in a Culturally Diverse Society: A Sociocultural Perspective

Papers presented by

Victoria R. Fu
Andrew J. Stremmel
Janet K. Sawyers
Katherine R. Allen
Karen B. DeBord
Ann J. Francis
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at the
1991 Annual Conference
National Association for the Education of Young Children
Denver, Colorado
November

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PREFACE

In the United States researchers, practitioners, and policy makers are increasingly being challenged to address the demands of a multicultural society. Teachers and teacher educators, facing the rapidly growing cultural diversity in this country, have to rethink curriculum and practices that are responsive to the diversity of children and families. A broader issue underlying the debate on educational reform is the role of schooling in a democracy. Specifically, how would the principles of justice, freedom and equality (Dewey, 1917) inform research, pedagogy and policy? Thus, over a year ago, the authors whose essays appear in this volume got together in an effort to develop a multicultural perspective that can be used to explore issues of concern in diverse contexts. We have raised many questions as we continuously construct our knowledge, values and beliefs of multiculturalism.

Our emerging multicultural perspective is based on a social reconstructivist approach that focuses on the diversity of individuals and on the contexts in which they live. Our sociocultural perspective is being constructed by synthesizing aspects of Bronfenbrenner's ecological concepts, Vygotsky's perspectives on development in a social context, and feminist perspectives on the critique of existing knowledge and the empowerment of marginalized groups.

The papers in this volume are an introduction to our work which is in progress. The authors try to provide information as well as raise questions about multicultural education. We hope that you will be challenged to reflect and rethink the concept multiculturalism in action, that is: to examine your own beliefs in conjunction with those of other people, to understand your feelings and those of others, to examine your interactions with people in different situations, to critique how various policies affect you and others in various contexts, and to critique your own feelings, beliefs and attitudes. In this process we hope that you will, as we do, examine your interactions with others in various contexts within which you live and work.

These papers were presented at the 1991 Annual Conference of the National

Association for the Education of Young Children, in Denver, CO. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Due to the large number of requests for our papers, this volume was put together to share our work with fellow educators, researchers and others who are interested in multiculturalism. In a time of budget crisis we regret that we have to charge a small fee to cover the cost of reproduction and mailing. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this collection of papers, please write to me or Karen B. DeBord at the Department of Family and Child Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0416.

Victoria R. Fu

Culture, Schooling, and Education in a Democracy

Victoria R. Fu

Introduction

The population of the United States is composed of peoples of many cultural backgrounds with a diversity of traditions. At the threshold of the twenty-first century the demographics of this nation is continuing a trend of rapid change, e.g., changes in an aging population, family structure, and ethnic minority population. In the foreseeable future, demographers expect that current minorities will be the "new majority" in this country. Thus, there is more than ever, a need for a more inclusive definition of multiculturalism that is representative of the diverse groups in our society, based on an organizing conceptual framework, which will inform our practice, design of research and policies. In short, it will provide a framework that provides guidance for us to explore ways to provide culturally relevant programs and services, including education, to all people in this country, regardless of cultural backgrounds.

Rogoff and Morelli (1989) recognized that most of us are blind to our cultural heritage. We are most likely to notice the role of culture when we compare the practices of groups other than our own, with a focus on the practices of minority groups. Thus, the tendency is to consider the practices of dominant cultural groups as "standard" while those of other groups as "variations."

As a point of illustration, I have often heard people, especially those of European heritage, say that they do not know about their cultural heritage and that they do not see how their heritage may have an effect on their behavior, beliefs, and practices. This unawareness of one's heritage may be a historical effect of collective assimilation and accommodation over time. However, we become aware of our heritage when we encounter contrasting practices (Rogoff & Morelli, 1989).

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Because we are desensitized and sensitized in such a manner, it is more imperative that we should use culture as a resource upon which our assumptions regarding human development and our practice are examined.

I would also like to bring to our awareness that each of us is a member of multiple cultures, defined for example, by race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, occupational status, SES, and family background. Thus, to a large extent our participation in society, and in different segments of society, is influenced by diverse culturally "prescribed" or expected beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors. Since "no 'one' is an island" we can assume that one's behavior, skills and interactions are closely tied to the structure of the ecology of human development, i.e., the sociocultural context in which development occurs. Therefore, we would like to proposed that a sociocultural perspective be used in examining issues underlying the concepts of multiculturalism, in general; and multicultural education, in particular, in a democratic society. We hope that collective examination and exploration of development and practices in sociocultural contexts, coupled with self-examination based on individual experiences; would lead us to interactions that promote cultural pluralism. That is, we will value differences as well as similarities among people from diverse cultures, while advocating for the maintenance of unity in the context of American democracy (Pai, 1990). From a pluralistic perspective, we recognize and respect our diversity of traditions; and value the strengths of an individual's heritage and not to impose one's cultural view upon others. And, as James Garbarino (1982) has proposed that a pluralistic perspective challenges us to be more tolerant and creative in our practice and research, and for those in dominant groups to share some of their powers in making policy decision.

We would like to suggest that, the concept of multiculturalism in education in a democracy be an inherent component of the current debate on educational reform and teacher training. Schools have traditionally been seen as a vehicle of social change. Many educators are dismayed that while other countries are struggling for democracy, we, as a nation, seem to demand less of democracy when it provides the guiding principles for education in a democracy (Giroux, 1991).

Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education Defined

Multiculturalism is a principle, an approach or a set of rules of conduct that guides the interactions and influences the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of peoples from diverse cultural backgrounds. It encompasses a myriad of human differences, including race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, occupation, SES, age, gender, sexual orientation, and functional status. Multiculturalism is relevant to all people, for majority as well as minority groups, regardless of individual cultural backgrounds. It is an approach to examine one's values, beliefs, and perceptions about cultural diversity, human rights and privileges in a democratic society. In this process we examine and critique our interactions with individuals and families in diverse contexts, e.g. teaching children in schools and other early childhood programs; teaching college students who will teach and/or participate in other ways in society; and providing services to individuals and families, etc.

Underlying multiculturalism are the values and beliefs inherent to a democracy -- the promotion of human rights and privileges, the sharing of power, and equal participation in all social contexts. In a democratic, pluralistic society we have the right to evaluate, decide and compare competing cultural idealogies in terms of what is in the best interest of human development (Garbarino, 1982).

Multicultural education refers to school policies, curriculum and teaching practice that foster understanding and appreciation of diversity and promote positive/constructive "intercultural" relations on all levels (systems). The values of participatory democracy and the sharing of power is reflected in interactions: between teachers and children and between children themselves; between teachers, school administrators, school governance bodies (school boards, school councils, etc), and parents; and from a more inclusive perspective, the social, political systems in which individuals and institutions function.

Inherent to multicultural education is the notion that one's cultural heritage, history and experience are viable forms of knowledge. These sources of knowledge serve as the bases to critique the relevance of knowledge, curriculum content and practices individuals are exposed to in the schools. Diverse cultural knowledge and relationships should influence decision regarding curriculum and

practice. Thus, a multicultural curriculum needs to be student-centered. It does not reject the "relevance" of cultural traditions but it is used in a way by teachers, parents, administrators and policy makers to examine the relevance of "traditional curriculum" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Giroux, 1991). Thus, central to multicultural education (programs and services) is that there are diverse ways of constructing and acquiring knowledge.

Schooling and Education

In order to understand the role of multicultural education in schools we must first examine the distinction between education and schooling. This is of special importance, for often policymakers fail to recognize the difference between these two concepts (Pai, 1991; Linney & Seidman, 1989; Hyman, 1979). Hyman (1979) stated that:

> Few in policymaking positions understand the difference between education and schooling. Education has to do with the processes of learning; schooling is the means by which social, political and economic factors shape the learning environment . . . (p. 1025)

Particular to multicultural education Pai (1991) stated that,

> ... multicultural education has almost always been associated with schooling. This erroneous equating of schooling and education inclines us to minimize the enormous impact our families, churches, industry, mass media, and other institutions outside of the school have on the development of the young. Further, as Gibson (1984) warns, if we attempt to change people's fundamental attitudes toward others and increase social justice by merely changing our schools, we are likely to disregard the larger sociopolitical and economic context of formal education (pp. 113-114).

Hence, the distinctive but inter-relatedness of these two concepts, education and schooling, helps us to understand how societal values and social policies influence decisions regarding what to teach, how to teach, and when to teach children. Congruent with our sociocultural perspective, this interaction reflects the reciprocal influences among various ecological systems. Furthermore, this notion of interaction is congruent with the principle that curriculum is derived from many sources: knowledge of child development, characteristics of individual children, knowledge base of various disciplines, values of our culture(s), and knowledge society thinks is important for children to know in order to function competently in our society (Spodek, 1988). Thus, a systemic conceptualization of the curriculum is inherent to the proposed sociocultural (soioecological) framework of multicultural education.

This conceptualization of multicultural education complements the suggested relationship between culture and schooling as described by Giroux (1991),

> A more critical understanding of the relationship between culture, and schooling would start with a definition of culture as a set of activities by which different groups produce collective memories, knowledge, social relationship, and values within historically controlled relations of power. Culture is about the production and legitimation of particular ways of life, and schools often transmit a culture that is specific to class, gender, and race. (p. 50)

Our proposed sociocultural framework of multicultural education takes into account the manner in which social and political values and policies define the school environment. For "from its inception the American public school system was intended to be a vehicle of social change. Political, economic and social factors have impinged on the structure and curriculum of the school system throughout history." (Giroux, 1988, p. 7)

To examine schooling, according to Roman and Apple (1990), is "to see schools as places that were and are formed out of cultural, political, and economic conflicts and compromises." (p. 41) Historically, mandated policies,

such as, school desegregation and mainstreaming, have changed the school's social environment. These policies have resulted in increasing diversity in schools. However, such policies have not been very effective in promoting multiculturalism. This is an issue of concern, for as stated earlier, crucial to education in a democracy is the incorporation of curriculum and teaching practices that acknowledges, respects and supports individual and cultural diversity and similarity. Potential conflicts in values and priorities between parents, the community and school are recognized. It has been suggested that professional expertise of educators (teachers) should have its place in making decisions regarding curriculum and practice (Katz, 1989). Thus, educators make decision regarding curriculum and practice by taking into account cultural values and interests of parents and communities based their expert knowledge about what, when and how to teach particular content (NAEYC, 1991). In such a context that subscribes multiculturalism there is a sharing of power.

Parents can help with building a connection between home and school; while teachers are empowered to be thinkers and decisions makers. Ultimately, children's learning potential is optimized. For teaching and learning will occur in contexts in which teachers provide assistance and guidance for children to acquire knowledge, skills, disposition and feelings toward learning in a manner that is real, meaningful and relevant to them (Katz, 1985; 1989).

In passing, without going into details, I would like to bring to your attention that we need to be cognizant of the historical, social, and political context of diversity in America. This knowledge will enhance multiculturalism in our interaction with diverse groups in diverse contexts.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

As mentioned above in the discussion about culture, schooling and education; a sociocultural framework is proposed for use in exploring multiculturalism and to implement multicultural education. This conceptual framework is based on theoretical assumptions underlying: (1) Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development; (2) Vygotsky's sociocultural context of human development; and (3) feminist perspective on valuing personal experience as a source of knowledge and as an insight about the connection between the

personal and the political systems. These three systemic theories complement each other, focusing on the contexts in which development occurs and the interactions between systems promote a constructivist view to development.

Bronfenbrenner's and Vygotsky's theories focus on the socioecological/sociocultural context of development. Bronfenbrenner's theory focuses on the mutual accommodation between the developing individual and the environment. Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development contributes to this framework in emphasizing that human development is inseparable from social and cultural activities. It is a theory of education as well as a theory of cultural transmission. According to Bruner (1987) "education implies for Vygotsky not only the development of individual potential but the historical expression and growth of human culture from when Man springs (pp. 1-2)." It provides principles for socialization that has particular meaning to instruction, e.g., his concepts of "intersubjectivity" and the "zone of proximal development." The feminist perspective values personal experience as a source of knowledge and an insight about the connection between the personal and the political systems. Thus, the feminist perspective provides the practitioner a language of critique to analyze how differences within and between social (cultural) groups are constructed and sustained in various contexts. Both in terms of pedagogy and politics central to these analyses is the notion of democracy (Giroux, 1991; Welsh, 1991). Thus, these three perspectives, together, provide an integrative framework to organize multicultural practice (pedagogy).

In short, we propose that the ideologies of American democracy be used as the shared assumption (reflected in the macrosystem) about how multicultural education could be implemented. This sociocultural perspective can be used to critique the relevance of competing cultural idealogies on the developing individual. For example, it can be used to examine school curriculum, practice, and policies; research findings; social, political and historical events; and prevention and intervention strategies.

A brief description of relevant theoretical concepts follows:

Bronfenbrenner and the Ecology of Human Development

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) ecological approach to human development

defines the interaction between an individual and the social and physical environment. It focuses the developing individual who actively interacts with the environment in a process of mutual accommodation. The environment is composed of four interlocking structural contexts (settings). The ecological environment includes the most immediate settings (home, school, work) in which an individual functions daily and the interaction between these immediate settings (the interaction or relationship between home, school, or work) and larger social settings (formal and informal social institutions), including the broader values and ideologies of a particular culture or subculture.

A brief description of the four interlocking structural levels of the ecological environment follows:

(1) The microsystems. These are the most immediate contexts in which the developing individual interacts with people who are in it. For example, the relationship between a child and family members in the home and the relationship between a child and teachers or peers in the school.

(2) The mesosystems. These are relationships between and among the various contexts in which the developing person experiences. For example, the relationship between a child's home and school. More linkages between home and school enhance a child's development.

(3) The exosystems. These are the contexts or situations that influence an individual's development but in which the individual does not directly participate. The exosystem includes parent's workplace and the formal and informal social/political institutions that make decisions that affect the child's life.

Decisions and interactions made in the exosystems may affect multicultural education in the schools. For example, school boards that mandate the implementation of particular curriculum or teaching practice regardless of appropriateness are undermining a teacher's role as thinker and decision maker. These practices may lead to teaching practices that do not challenge children to think, to explore, and to question; versus a child-centered constructivist

perspective to teaching and learning. This latter perspective of teaching takes into account individual and cultural difference, and promotes multiculturalism in a democracy.

(4) The macrosystems. Bronfenbrenner conceives the macrosystem as "blueprints" of the ecology of human development:

> The macrosystem refers to consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro-, Meso-, and exo-) that exist, or could exist, at the level of subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies (1979, p. 26).

Hence, the macrosystem reflects a shared assumption, among people, of "how things could be done." (Garbarino, 1982, p. 24) Pluralism is a macrosystem issue because culture is made up of a diversity of traditions. Specifically, the macrosystem consists of cultural or subcultural values, beliefs, and ideologies that influence the interactions within and between meso- and exosystems.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) recognizes that these blueprints might be "in error" and need to be evaluated and criticized in terms of whether they promote or impede human development. Thus, the ecology of human development has a function in promoting and evaluating social policy. History, repeatedly, shows that the macrosystem could and would change. Thus, it can be proposed that multicultural education and research could bring changes in practice and policies in schools and other institutions.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Context of Development

Vygotsky's sociocultural context of development complements Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development. Vygotsky's theory has direct implication for multicultural education. We recognize that the constructivist perspectives of both Piaget and Vygotsky contribute to our knowledge of how children learn (education) as well as how and what to teach (schooling) from a sociocultural perspective. Both theories emphasize that children construct their own knowledge and that development is influenced by social interaction.

However, for this presentation we will focus on the perspectives of Vygotsky.

Central to Vygotsky's (1978) theory is that human development is inseparable from social and cultural activities. According to him, children's development of higher mental processes involve learning to use the inventions of society (or tools of culture, such as, language and mathematics) through the assistance and guidance of other people who are more skilled in the use of these tools (Rogoff & Morelli, 1989).

Thus, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspective suggests that while children actively construct an understanding of their own world, they also benefit from guided interactions with more skilled partners (adults and peers). That is, children learn through "scaffolding" (assisted interaction) or guided participation (Rogoff, 1986, 1990). This interaction is a means by which children become enculturated in the use of the intellectual tools of their society (e.g., language). Social encounters in a variety of contexts lead to understanding and self-regulation (Stremmel, Fu, & Stone, 1991).

Vygotsky (1978) referred to the range between what children can function on their own and what they can achieve with assistance (scaffolding) as the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). With the assistance of adults and more competent peers, children acquire knowledge and skills and ways to solve problems: first, with support and guidance and later independently. Rogoff and Gardner (1984) proposed that learning of culturally defined goals are achieved through transfer of responsibility in such a manner.

As pointed out by Katz, Evangelou, and Hartman (1990), "Current concepts of cognitive development-- the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky) and 'cognitive conflict' (Piaget)--imply that children whose knowledge or ability are similar but not identical stimulate each other's thinking and cognitive growth." (p. v) This is a description of a process of learning and interacting embedded in the notion of "intersubjectivity." Intersubjectivity is the coordination of perspectives through sharing of purpose and making sensitive adjustments of each other during interpersonal activities (Trevarthen, 1980). This particular concept is, in our opinion, essential to teaching in a culturally diverse society.

Feminist Perspective on Multiculturalism

Feminist perspective offers a new dimension to multicultural education, particularly in the practice of valuing personal experience as a source of knowledge and as an insight about the connection between the personal and the political system. Personal experience and values are acknowledged, understood, learned and made meaningful in the joint process of constructing individual cultural selves in relations to one another. Feminist perspective incorporates a belief that valuing and encouraging flexibility and difference within the self will allow for more flexible interactions across individuals, as well.

Conclusion

In short, we hope that our conceptual framework can be used as a vehicle to generate interest in further exploration of multiculturalism and implementation of culturally relevant practices in schools and other social institutions. We hope that our proposed framework and "mode of language" will enable us; teachers, parents, researchers, policymakers and others to critically examine assumptions embedded in multiculturalism. Lastly, we hope, all of us, with our collective knowledge gained from research and practice, and our commitment to multiculturalism will make a difference in our interactions across systems.

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Diversity in America: Historical, Social, and Political Context

Diane V. Roberts

Throughout history, various events have given rise to social movements. These, in turn, have led to political actions that have caused social change. Schooling, as an institution in society, and as part of the macrosystem, has been called on to help implement these social changes. Over the last century, various programs have been created in response to social change, one of which is multicultural education. How have the educational system and teachers translated this into classrooms? More importantly, what effect does all this have on the development of children?

Our country was founded on the ideals of democracy, with the notion that equality and justice would be accessible for all individuals and groups. Yet, as our country was formed, not all groups were included in the institutional structures as citizens. Diversity in our country has been here since the beginning in the 1600's. When the colonists settled in Jamestown and later in Plymouth, there were as many as 2 million Native Americans distributed between 240 tribes across the land. In 1619, the first 20 African slaves were brought to Jamestown. This number grew to 4 million by 1860. Immigration from Europe brought over 29 million people by 1890. In 1850, 300,000 Chinese immigrated to work as laborers. Many of the immigrants became part of the working class, making it the majority of the population between 1800 and post World War I in 1918. However, dominant cultural norms were based on the middle class.

As the numbers of people in these diverse groups increased, it became clearer that the expectations, hope for, and promise of equality and justice was not being met. The institutions in society excluded these groups, and perpetuated conditions that were intolerable. James Banks (1985) proposed that this created the beginning of social movements in our country. During these social movements, groups became polarized from the rest of society and formed strong identities as a group.

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The early women's rights movement, involving 2 million women by 1917, focused on support of the right to vote which was finally attained in 1920. A second women's liberation movement began again in 1966, which supported the Equal Rights Amendment as one of its goals, although that failed to be ratified in the 1970's. The Civil War was the height of the social movement calling for freedom for slaves. The Civil War, however, did not resolve equality issues for African-Americans.

Beginning in the 1940's, and the 1950's, numerous protests began, involving many rallies and demonstrations, including the famous one in 1963 where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech. Gay and lesbian rights began in the early 1920's, which grew to over 50 organizations for gays and lesbians by 1969. Rights for the disabled began in the 1960's, soon after the civil rights movement.

As these social movements were initiated out of frustration with institutional discrimination, conservative members of society often responded to defend the status quo. This, according to James Banks is one of the processes that is ongoing with social movements in a country. Some of these conservative stances took the form of other social movements, while other actions were in the political arena. For example, Chinese immigrants were prohibited from marrying, and new immigrants were limited by legislation. Around the 1900's, a group called the "Nativists" organized as opponents to immigration, fearing they would be outnumbered. Although 3 Constitutional Amendments granted freedom, citizenship, and suffrage to African-Americans, the Supreme Court failed to support these freedoms including access to hotels, restaurants, and theaters. Further, in 1896, the Supreme Court ruled that the 14th Amendment phrase of "separate but equal" allowed for separate facilities as a racial distinction rather than viewing it as discrimination, a decision not reversed until the 1930's. The McCarthyism era forced the view of gay orientation to the "feminine" side.

However, not all responses to the social movements by others in society were from a conservative stance defending the status quo. Legislative and political actions have continued to offer remedies to the demands of the activist social movements. According to James Banks, these tended to be large programs intended to benefit multiple groups of people who were experiencing

discrimination. Further immigration of refugees from wars allowed more diverse cultures to come to our country. Other societal institutions were desegregated, such as the military in 1950 and the schools in the 1960's. The Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act in 1957, created a commission to monitor discrimination violations and to ensure equality. Some states decriminalized homosexuality in 1961 and 1971. Organizations of mental health professionals removed homosexuality as a category of illness from diagnostic manuals during the 1970's. Rights for the disabled and a guarantee of equal access to education for the disabled were legislated. The 1965 Older Americans Act also recognized rights of the elderly by providing economic, health, and social benefits, adding to the Social Security Act.

Educational programs were first called on in the early 1900's to respond to the social movements. The "melting pot" ideal of assimilating all diverse cultures was integrated into the structures of schooling. This ideal had the expectation for all immigrants or non-dominant cultures to mold themselves into the dominant American culture of European origin. However, many of the social movement groups began to oppose those assimilationist goals by the 1960's. This was part of the beginning of the last phase of social movements outlined by James Banks. By the 1970's, the view of cultural pluralism was given new support as the ideal. Teachers' associations and certification programs took a stand in support of pluralism in 1970's. This new reform to structurally include the diverse groups in schooling became the focus of multicultural education. Its goal was intended to help all students experience equal education and increase achievement.

Of ultimate concern to all educators is the impact these events in the macrosystem of society have on the development of the children in America. James Banks articulated this well:

> "It is difficult for students to develop positive attitudes toward other groups and a strong identification with the nation unless they have a clarified identification with their first cultures. Understanding and relating positively to self is a requisite to understanding and relating positively to other groups and people."

In multicultural education, the ideals of equality, justice and human dignity become the common values to teach toward unity in our country. What more could we want for our children?

Historical Milestones of Multiculturalism

Compiled by
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Diversity in America existed from the beginning in colonial times. Political ideology of democracy called for equality and justice, but some groups were denied this equality and structural inclusion into the nation/state (Banks, 1985). As the dominant culture was established by white male landowners, existing nondominant cultures were oppressed and expected to conform. Banks (1985) suggests that this oppression gave rise to movements calling for social change, and caused polarization of and shaping new identities in those groups. These movements eventually initiated reform of the institutions (political, educational, etc.) through policies, legislation, programs, and projects that benefit multiple groups. Banks (1985) suggests that the final step for change is the structural inclusion and equality within the state/nation.

The following timeline reviews the events in history that occurred for diverse groups, and the resulting social movements and/or political changes they initiated. While this list is not exhaustive, it is intended to describe the historical, social, and political contexts (part of the macrosystem, Bronfenbrenner, 1986) over time (the chronosystem, Bronfenbrenner, 1986) for the diverse members of America. The diversity categories include race, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, sexual orientation, and exceptionality, and age.

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1600's
HISTORICAL EVENTS

- Native Americans already here numbered between 850,000 and 2 million, distributed between 240 tribes.

- Colonists came to New England for religious freedom.

- Colonists came to the Chesapeake area for monetary gain.

- Of the colonists who came, 70-85% immigrated as indentured servants.

- In 1619, 20 African slaves were brought to Jamestown.

- By 1675, there were 4,000 African slaves in MD/VA, whose legal status was restricted by laws.

- By 1670, only 10% of the Native Americans originally in New England remained, with the losses due to death from illnesses and massacres.

1700's
HISTORICAL EVENTS

- Between 1720 and 1780, 60% of the 550,000 Africans who were forcibly imported arrived, a 3:2 ratio of men.

- By 1770, only 4-6% of the population were over age 60 in the MD/VA region; in New England, more lived to 70's.

- By 1790, there were 750,000 Africans in the U.S., 9/10 of whom were slaves, and made up 20% of the population.

- U.S. Constitution gave emancipation to male landowners.

1800's
HISTORICAL EVENTS

- By 1820, there were 1,500,000 slaves in the U.S.
- Beginning in 1800, there were 5,000 immigrants/year.
- From the early 1800's until after World War I in 1918, the working class was the majority of the population.
- Dominant cultural norms were based on the middle class.
- In 1850, 2/3 of children had 1 parent die; 1/3 had both parents die.
- In 1850, only 10% of slaves lived to age 50; life expectancy was 28-36 years, 12 years less than whites.
- By 1860, there were 4 million slaves in the U.S.
- Between 1830 and 1900, there were 29 million immigrants.
- In 1850, 300,000 Chinese immigrated to CA and the West to work on the rail system, mining, agriculture, and manufacturing. Very few were women and children; marriage by Chinese was illegal.
- Legislation to limit Asian immigrants was established in 1882 and 1924.
- After 1890, immigration from eastern Europe brought more religious diversity of Catholics and Jews.
- Industrial Revolution caused men to work away from their home, dividing men's and women's work into two spheres. Migration to urban centers increased.

• Between 1890 and 1910, women's college enrollment tripled.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

• In 1848, women who met in Seneca Falls called for sexual equality.

• The early women's rights movements was from 1848 to 1875.

• In 1869, two women's organizations were founded with a combined membership of 10,000 by 1890.

• In 1872, the Equal Rights Party endorsed a woman for President.

POLITICAL EVENTS

• The Civil War resulted in 3 Constitutional Amendments in 1865-1869, granting freedom, citizenship, and suffrage to Blacks.

• In 1883, the Supreme Court overturned a Congressional act that would have ensured Blacks access to hotels, restaurants, and theaters.

• In 1896. the Supreme Court ruled, in Plessy vs.Ferguson, that the 14th Amendment phrase of "separate but equal" facilities allowed for racial distinctions, but not racial discrimination. This gave way to second-class, separate facilities.

1900's
HISTORICAL EVENTS

• In 1908, a Broadway show, The Melting Pot, described the assimilationist view that all diverse cultures were to become part of the dominant culture. Schools were to help transmit this dominant culture.

- "Nativists" organized around 1900 as opponents to immigration, fearing they would be outnumbered.

- In 1930 during the Great Depression, 400,000 Mexican Americans were sent back to Mexico.

- Immigration after World War II allowed for refugees to come to the U.S., later including Asians from the Korean War and Viet Nam era.

- Invention of radio and television had large impact on public knowledge and cultural transmission.

- During World War II, 112,000 Japanese from the West Coast were relocated to encampments in the U.S.

- Movie themes in the 1920-30's included homosexuality, but were censored.

- In 1945, McCarthyism focused on anti-communism and forced views of homosexuality to the "feminine" side.

- The view of cultural pluralism was given new support in the 1970's.

- By 1980's, over half of mothers with infants continued working outside the home.

- Political conservatism returned in the 1980's.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

- By 1917, there were 2 million women in the women's movement. The focus from 1890-1925 focused on Suffrage.

- In 1966, the National Organization of Women was founded. By 1983 it had 175,000 members. Support for the Equal Rights Amendment was one focus.

- During WWII, NAACP was active for civil rights issues. Other organizations were formed, like Congress of Racial Equality.

- The 1936 election of FDR had record numbers of Blacks voting.

- In 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to sit in the back of the bus.

- Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's began a new era of social change toward racial equality. Numerous rallies, demonstrations, and marches were held over the next 20 years.

- The rally in Washington, DC with M.L. King's "I have a dream" speech drew 1/4 million people in 1963.

- James Meredith entered school at the University of MS in 1962.

- The Chicago Society for Human Rights in the early 1920's supported civil rights for homosexuals.

- In 1965, a gay rights group, ECHO, demonstrated against the Civil Service Commission.

- By 1969, there were over 50 organizations for gays and lesbians in the U.S. and Canada.

- In 1969, the NY police raided the Stonewall gay bar, starting a rebellion by gay rights activists.

- Disability rights movement emerged soon after the civil rights movements in the late 1960's.

POLITICAL EVENTS

- In 1924, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of Children was made by world leaders. This was further clarified in 1979.

- In 1948, the Human Rights Declaration by the United Nations called for "respect for all persons."

- The Social Security Act was passed in 1935 to provide old age benefits for the elderly. It has been amended several times since.

- The 1965 Older Americans Act, providing economic, health, and social benefits, recognized the rights of older adults.

- In 1920, women got the right to vote with ratification of the 19th Amendment.

- Although the Equal Rights Amendment was passed in the early 1970's, it failed to be ratified by the states.

- In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled to legalize abortion in the case of Roe vs. Wade.

- The NAACP challenged the Plessy vs. Ferguson case and won. MD and MO law and graduate schools were desegregated.

- The Voting Rights Act was passed in 1957 to guarantee Blacks the right to vote. This helped eliminate some of the "Jim Crow" laws of Southern racial social rules.

- The military was desegregated in 1950.

- In 1954, Brown vs. the Board of Education won, with the Supreme Court finding the notion of "separate but equal" having no place in this country.

- The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1957, creating a commission to monitor the violations and ensure justice concerning racial equality in voting.

- The 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act further clarified equality for all Americans.

- Schools were ordered to desegregate by the Federal government, in accordance with legislation. This created forced busing in many school districts.

- Headstart began in the 1960's, as a compensatory education. It still viewed nondominant cultures as deficient.

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was enacted to support the rights of children. UNESCO was founded at the UN.

- In 1974, UNESCO adopted recommendations about human rights and fundamental freedoms.

- The UN developed a Commission of Human Rights in 1978.

- In 1979, the UN passed the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and held the International Year of the Child.

- In 1961, Illinois was the first state to decriminalize homosexuality. CO, CT, and OR followed in 1971.

- The American Psychological Association, in 1973-4, took homosexuality out of the official diagnostic manual.

- The World Health Organization deleted homosexuality as a classification of mental illness in 1979.

- The 1973 Rehabilitation Act was the legal linchpin of the 1974 Amendment calling for disabled rights.

- In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act guaranteed equal access to education for disabled.

- In 1972, the National Education Association took a stand supporting cultural pluralism.

- The American Association of College Teacher Educators (AACTE) and the American Society of Curriculum Development (ASCD) supported and got a law passed requiring pre-service teachers to receive education in multicultural issues.

- In 1984, accreditation procedures broadened, but NCATE dropped multicultural education as a separate category, although it retained education for culturally different.

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Responsive Teaching: A Culturally Appropriate Approach

Andrew J. Stremmel

Debate over appropriate educational goals and teaching methods have fueled controversy within the field of early childhood education between academically accelerated versus child centered forms of instruction (see Bereiter, 1986; Kagan & Zigler, 1987; Schweinhart, Weikart, & Larner, 1986). On one side of the debate, there are those who believe that young children do not need to be taught learning skills; rather, teachers should build upon the inherent skills and interests that children bring to learning situations (e.g., Elkind, 1987). Advocates of academic acceleration, on the other hand, argue that providing academic skills early will accelerate children's education and result in more learning (e.g., Doman, 1965; Engelmann & Engelmann, 1981). While most early childhood educators in this country would agree that teaching must be developmentally appropriate, taking into account the developmental characteristics and interests of the child, there is still uncertainty regarding the extent to which the values, goals, and teaching methods of other cultures should determine educational aims and developmentally appropriate practices. The aim of this paper is to begin to address the question, "Which teaching practices are appropriate for whom, and under what circumstances?"

Research suggests that early childhood curricula should provide opportunities for children to interact with peers, caregivers, aspects of their environment, and to engage in active rather than passive activities (Katz, 1987). Caregivers must be continually responsive to the spontaneously expressed interests and intentions of children as they pursue informal activities (Elkind, 1976; Katz, 1987; Katz & Goffin, 1990; Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1990). Moreover, to sufficiently meet the needs of children from diverse cultural backgrounds, teaching practices must be relevant to and meaningful in the sociocultural context of the systems in which children live and develop (Rogoff & Morelli, 1989).

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Evidence from existing research suggests, however, that children from diverse backgrounds do not interact equally with adults in classroom activities (Ingham, 1982; Ogilvy, Boath, Cheyne, Jahoda, and Schaffer, submitted). For example, Ogilvy and associates found that nursery school teachers are less likely to be responsive to minority children, adopting a controlling style, regardless of individual differences in ability. In the following pages, the meaning of responsive teaching is discussed, along with ways to help early childhood teachers become more responsive in their interactions with children having various backgrounds and experiences.

Responsive teaching occurs when caregivers offer sensitive guidance and assistance at points in "the zone of proximal development" at which performance requires assistance (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development refers to the range between what children can do on their own and what they can achieve with the assistance of others who are more skilled in a particular domain of knowledge. Working within this "zone", children gain skills that allow them to assume increasing responsibility for their own learning. They learn not only how to perform a given task, but also how to structure their learning and reasoning in solving problems.

Responsive teaching involves the construction and negotiation of shared meaning or perspective in conversational interaction (Stone, 1985). Intersubjectivity, the linguistic concept denoting a sharing of purpose or focus in the coordination of perspectives (Rommetveit, 1985; Trevarthen, 1980), is crucial in responsive teaching because it is important for collaborative partners to determine a common ground for communication and understanding. Within this context, children actively participate in the construction of knowledge, and as a result, "appropriate" an increasingly advanced understanding of the skills and perspectives of their culture (Rogoff, 1990).

Responsive teaching is predicated on the interactive patterns observed between adults and children in many cultures and in joint activity settings where participants have different skills and skill levels. It differs from conventionally-defined means of instruction in several ways. First, responsive teaching should not be conceptualized as the simple transfer of knowledge and skills, by those knowing more to those knowing less (Moll, 1990). Both adult and child collaborate in structuring the situations that provide the latter with

opportunities to observe and participate in culturally valued activities, thereby enabling them to extend their current skills and knowledge to a higher level of competence. Therefore, unlike conventional instructive practices, responsive teaching does not assist children in developing skills they do not already possess; rather, it "rouses to life" those functions and skills that are in the process of maturing (Vygotsky, 1956).

Second, traditional or teacher-directed forms of instruction involve making presuppositions about a task explicitly known prior to task-engagement. This minimizes the child's active role in constructing understanding of the task, while maximizing the teacher's role. In responsive teaching, however, the teacher's role is to provide just enough guidance to enable the child, through his or her own efforts, to assume full control in performing a task.

Third, teacher-directed instruction typically employs a single teaching method. Katz (1987) has argued that a single teaching method (homogeneous treatment) is bound to produce heterogeneous outcomes in children from diverse backgrounds. While the goal of education should not be to produce children who have the same talents and abilities, many outcomes with respect to knowledge, skills, and dispositions should be the same for all children. For example, we want all children to develop social and communicative competence and the disposition to read. In responsive teaching, the assumption of a single or "best" way to teach gives way to the planned utilization of a variety of teaching strategies, including modeling, questioning, giving descriptive feedback, coaching, and prompting. Responsive teaching, therefore, involves the systematic use of a repertoire of alternative strategies that are more likely to be suitable to children having diverse needs and learning styles.

For the reasons cited above, responsive teaching methods should not be confused with accelerated attempts to teach academic skills to preschool children. As Sigel (1987) has pointed out, the major factor that differentiates academic acceleration from intellectual enhancement is <u>how</u> teachers engage children and the <u>degree of control</u> children have in their activities. In sum, responsive teaching helps children to: 1) build bridges between what they already know and what they are capable of knowing; 2) structure and support their efforts in interesting and meaningful activities; and, 3) assume increasing responsibility for task performance and management (Rogoff, 1990; Tharp &

Gallimore, 1988). Children increase understanding by relating what they are learning to what they already know (Carey, 1986). This bridging between the "known" and the "new" in communicative interaction presumes intersubjectivity. Thus, in dealing with culturally diverse children, initial differences in perspective must be modified in order to reach a common ground for communication (and thus understanding).

Examples of Responsive Teaching

In developmentally appropriate, responsive teaching, adults observe and build upon children's understandings, interests, and intentions in helping them pursue an activity, problem, or task. This requires the adult to possess some prior knowledge of each child's current level of functioning, and a sense of when to intervene and when to hold back, allowing children to make self-discoveries when they are able, but also providing the necessary cues when children are in need of assistance with a task or activity. Children meanwhile must be intrinsically motivated and interested in a meaningful activity that will allow for varying degrees of challenge.

In the teaching-learning context employing the zone of proximal development, an early childhood teacher presents an activity or play setting that provides multiple options for challenge and involvement. Because many activities (e.g., building with Legos or blocks) do not do not require a "correct" way of approaching and engaging in them, the teacher must effectively identify the child's intention in relation to the activity in order to achieve a measure of intersubjectivity that will enable the teacher to assist the child in extending his or her play more fully. The teacher may simply provide reminders or suggestions, give hints or ask questions, or it may be necessary at times to demonstrate to the child exactly what to do. Furthermore, the teacher must be ready and able to capitalize on the spontaneously expressed interests of children as they emerge from ongoing events in the classroom. Some examples are helpful.

Consider a situation in which a 3-year-old child has approached a collage activity which has been planned for the art area in a preschool classroom. Art is an activity engaged in by people all over the world to represent historical and

cultural events, as well as personal experiences (Ramsey, 1987). Thus, like adults in their society, children use various tools and materials to represent their experiences and express their feelings through art activities. The collage activity discussed here is an example of a semi-structured, creative activity that is fairly common in preschool education. Even before interacting with the child, the teacher has responsively selected and arranged the tools and materials that are appropriate for a child of this age. In a nature collage, for example, leaves of various sizes, colors, and shapes, in addition to twigs, seeds, and other items that children may have gathered themselves outdoors, may be provided along with paper and glue. The teacher's goal may be to have the child glue the various items onto the paper. However, this may not be the child's intention in attempting the activity. The sensitive adult must accurately tailor his or her assistance to the child by being responsive to the child's understanding of the activity. If the child has a limited understanding of what to do, the teacher may offer a suggestion or ask a question (e.g., "What could you do with these?") to help the child get started. The child may proceed by gluing items together (e.g., seeds onto leaves), as opposed to onto the paper. As the interaction continues, different ideas about how to use the materials may emerge as the teacher and child work together toward achieving increasing intersubjectivity. When some mutual conception of an appropriate way to do the task has been acquired through dialogue, the child should be allowed to work creatively and unassisted within acceptable and mutually understood parameters (e.g., the child may not glue items onto another's paper or onto the table). At this point, descriptive feedback about the process (e.g., "You are using leaves of different colors") or questions to extend the activity (e.g., "Is there anything else you would like to add to your collage?") are appropriate.

The art activity described above appropriately requires less adult responsibility or control than activities that are likely to need careful adult supervision, such as cooking. Like art, cooking or preparing food is an activity observable in many cultures and in home settings. In other cultures, children take part the preparation of food through the process of guided participation, in which opportunities to observe through modelling are common in everyday experience (Rogoff, 1986, 1990). This kind of collaborative activity typically requires the adult to take greater responsibility because of its importance to

survival. However, the child actively participates at points where his or her skill level is congruent with the task demands. In preschool settings, children may take part in stirring, cutting, and serving, while the teacher demonstrates certain procedures or describes what is happening as ingredients are mixed, measured, and cooked. Such opportunities for mutual involvement in culturally meaningful activity provide an important teaching-learning context.

The value of mutually-directed activity is also evident in the project approach to early childhood education as advocated by Katz and Chard (1989). A project is a group undertaking that enables children of many different ability levels and backgrounds to collaborate on a theme or topic that extends over a period of days or weeks, depending on the children's ages and interests. In project work, the adult has an important role in guiding the work undertaken; however, the work evolves from ideas, discussions, and matters that are interesting and familiar to children.

It is critical to note that for responsive teaching to be developmentally appropriate it must not rely on too much demonstration or make excessive demands. For example, questioning, a crucial strategy in teaching, must lead to meaningful and reciprocal interchange. Problems may result when a child is unable to benefit from adult questioning because it is unnatural or does not sustain meaningful dialogue. For instance, when children are asked questions repeatedly, they have little chance to contribute to a task or initiate their own ideas. In over questioning a child, the adult assumes too much control for the learning. The responsive teacher must be able to recognize the child's inability to understand, and know how to manage the task situation when the child fails to respond, or gives a "wrong" or unrelated response. It is the "wrong" response that often produces the most useful information about how to tailor instruction to the zone of proximal development (Blank, 1973; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). When used appropriately, questions can serve as useful barometers of mental performance, enabling the teacher to assess the level appropriate to the next stage of learning.

Early childhood classrooms can be viewed as contexts for teaching as well as learning. By teaching, we refer not to the use of inappropriate formal instructional techniques designed to teach narrowly defined academic skills, but to instructional practices that draw upon a variety of teaching strategies in

collaborative activity. Child sensitive, responsive teaching involves the mutual negotiation of activity and joint construction of meaning in social, communicative contexts. It is this form of teaching that may provide the best means for early childhood teachers to be responsive to individual differences in educability (Belmont, 1989; Wood, 1988).

Implications for Teacher Education

How best can we prepare prospective early childhood teachers to be responsive to the needs of diverse children? In this paper it has been argued that sensitive adult assistance enables children to proceed through the zone of proximal development. Unfortunately, few teachers know how to do this. Teachers must not only be equipped with the pedagogical skills considered important to teaching young children (and there is no consensus on these), they must be trained to utilize the skills essential to teaching in the zone of proximal development. Among other things, this includes the ability to assess the needs, abilities, and interests of a diverse group of children, and to know how to meet these once discovered, drawing from a repertoire of teaching strategies. Even in early childhood classrooms where individualized learning is enhanced through activity centers that provide multiple options and challenges for child involvement, considerable time, knowledge, and skills are necessary. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) have suggested that to develop such skills, teachers must be provided with opportunities to: 1) observe competent practitioners of responsive teaching; 2) practice newly acquired skills; 3) receive audio- and videotaped feedback about their instruction; and, 4) have their teaching practice assisted by a skilled mentor.

Critical to responsive teaching practice is the ability of teachers to be reflective during their interactions with children. Early childhood teachers, according to Lay-Dopyera and Dopyera (1987), appear to rely on what Donald Schon (1983) terms "knowing-in-action" rather than "reflection-in-action". That is, they use actions that are carried out almost automatically with little deliberation before or during teaching interactions. However, responsive teaching is never entirely automatic; it involves reflectivity and active decision-making (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Teachers who teach responsively need to

reflect on what they are doing in the midst of their activity, evaluate how well it is working, and, as a result, make changes in their teaching practices.

Self-reflection has been recognized as useful technique for connecting personal experience to that of others (e.g., see Bowman, 1989). We believe that thoughtful and careful examination of teachers' own prior experiences (i.e., as a teacher and learner) and intuitive understanding is necessary for achieving intersubjectivity in responsive teaching. In this way of thinking, a teacher cannot begin to understand the perspective of the learner without first considering one's own system of values and attitudes about teaching and children's learning. Thus, teacher education programs must encourage prospective teachers to use self-reflection to help them get in touch with their own personal experiences, and how these experiences may influence their teaching practices, so as to examine such practices against the experiences, values, and beliefs of others, especially those from diverse backgrounds.

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Family Diversity and Multicultural Education
Changing Characteristics of Postmodern Families

Katherine R. Allen

Postindustrial Society

Although most of us do not live in the families that appear in magazines and textbooks, many Americans believe in and ascribe to the romantic myth of "till death do us part," in which it is assumed that first time partners form commitments and rear children with each other for the rest of their lives. This romantic myth about lifelong family stability, which falsely carries with it the underlying assumption of family harmony, is resistant to the competing reality that there has always been a wide variety of intimate behaviors and lifestyles practiced throughout history. Family structure, which is "who lives with whom," and family harmony, which is, "how well they get along with each other" are not necessarily locked in lifelong embrace. Perhaps all that changes over the years is the ease, willingness, and openness people feel in discussing and disclosing the diversity that they live (Rubin, 1990).

Ironically, what has been called the "traditional family" was only in fashion for about 30 years, and never more popular, at least for white middle class Americans, than in the 1950s. At its peak, from the late 1940s to the late 1950s--a time that is also referred to as the postwar era, and the first wave of the baby boom--60% of American households conformed to the breadwinner, full-time homemaker form that is known as the "modern family" (Stacey, 1990).

The seeds of the modern family's undoing were already sewn in an ever-changing economy: the economy of the modern period was shifting from the Industrial Era, which began in the 19th century, about 150 years ago, to the Postindustrial Era, which dates back to the 1950s.

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The economy went from heavy industries to non-unionized clerical, service, and new industrial sectors, such as the computer industry. Employers sought new sources of cheap labor, and they found it in the suburbs, in the form of married women and mothers (Stacey, 1990, p. 10).

Following the demographic anomaly of the baby boom, women, after 1964, which is when the 20 year baby boom declined, began limiting their fertility again as a strategy to balance both work and family roles. Now mothers of young children, who were also mothers with few children, were working for wages in great numbers outside the home. Divorce laws had been changing and reforming since 1900, leading the way to greater personal choice in adult intimate lifestyles.

These changing economic, social, legal, and political structures had great impact for families. Families, in turn, were not passive recipients of change, but were shaping the economy and the nature of employment by sending out mothers, fathers, and teenagers to work in the paid labor force (Hareven, 1987).

Postmodern Families

Now, in the late 20th century, we have postmodern families (Gergen, 1991). Society is characterized by changes in the broader social structure that were unanticipated when we were young. Feminist sociologist Judith Stacey (1990) points out that most of us cannot expect to surpass our parents in terms of education, income, and occupation, the three traditional ways in which social class achievement has been measured.

The changes include: escalating inflation, a shrinking middle class, the prohibitive cost of home ownership for all but the wealthy in most urban and suburban areas, job insecurity due to lay-offs and plant shut-downs, and the ever-changing nature of work life, with new occupations arising and established occupations being rendered obsolete overnight (Ehrenreich, 1989; Stacey, 1990).

Diverse Family Forms

Our postmodern families take on diverse forms. We are dual-career families, single-parent families, teen-age parent families, and blended families (Coleman,

1990). More specifically, postmodern families include: A young black mother whose nonresidential male partner co-parents her child; an interracial couple with an adopted child; lesbian mothers with a child conceived through alternate insemination; four generations of female kin under one roof; a divorced-extended family, in which our child interacts on a regular basis with two sets of parents and multiple sets of grandparents; a lifelong single woman caring for her aging mother. Thus, our expectations about what families look like do not match what still appears in textbooks. The "textbook family" (Mancini & Orthner, 1988) reflects the myth of the "good old days," what sociologist William Goode (1956) has called the "classical extended family of Western nostalgia." We can no longer assume that we have a definition for what is "normative" in terms of family structure and process.

Family Process

One way to see the high divorce and migration rate among families is to look at family process. Individuals continue to have high expectations for the therapeutic aspect of family life and can be impatient or demand change if emotional needs are not met. Psychological pressures in contemporary family life contribute to an individual's desire to change their life, when they perceive their relationships to be unhappy (Demo, in press; Glenn, 1990).

It is not that marriage per se is no longer valued. Rather, the therapeutic aspect of a close intimate relationship is so important to some individuals that they are willing to discard a partner in which the relationship is not fulfilling emotionally, even if it is working economically (Ehrenreich, Hess, & Jacobs, 1986).

Family Structure

Terms and categories are now being used for family structure that no longer presume that marriage and parenthood are forever linked. For example, it is often assumed that there are high rates of father absence in the homes established by teenage mothers, particularly those of African-American origin. Yet, Demographer Frank Mott (1990) has conducted an analysis of the National

Longitudinal Survey of Youth to examine family transitions in terms of paternal presence or absence in homes without a biological father. The data, drawn from women aged 14 to 21, showed that for all races, 60% of children of unmarried mothers are likely to have at least weekly contact with their non-resident fathers or other father figures, such as their mother's new partner. Although the biological father may not reside with the mother, many children still have contact and support from fathers and father figures.

By considering demographics other than marital status, these analyses are more sensitive to the realistic, complex, and diverse ways in which women and men join in parenting their children. We no longer have to assume the myths about "traditional" family groupings.

Gender

The ways in which the emotional and structural aspects of parenthood and family life are experienced vary by gender (Baber & Allen, in press; Ferree, 1990; Goode, 1982; LaRossa, 1988; Thompson & Walker, 1989). Feminists describe the contradictions in the ways motherhood and fatherhood are experienced by individuals and how parenting is not supported by society. Mothers, especially, are charged with the task of producing children who are acceptable to society, but they are given few tangible supports or rewards to carry out this invisible labor (Ruddick, 1989).

A Commitment to Caring

Postmodern families face an uphill climb in terms of gaining acceptance and their fair share of societal resources. We should not, however, succumb to the extreme assessments of Pollyannas and doomsayers in considering new proposals for policy, advocacy, and change (Mancini & Orthner, 1988).

Bronfenbrenner and Weiss (1983) suggest "preposterous proposals for change" to help parents and thus support child development and growth. One proposal is a "curriculum of caring" in the schools, so that every young child begins early in life to know how to care for and about other living beings (thus, one gender or one race does not have the sole experience of being the person whose needs

are always met by some other group). Another proposal is to offer both women and men who are parents a three-quarter work week, so that one extra day per week is reserved for family time.

Perhaps we can take a page from the book of those educated Black women who, 100 years ago, founded the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. Their model for racial uplift and social change, according to feminist theorist Patricia Hill Collins (1990, p. 149) was "lifting as we climb."

Whether we raise children or not, we would all do well to place children's lives in the center of our visions for change.

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Weaving Multiculturalism into the Fabric of the Community

Karen B. DeBord

Every community has its own unique personality, its own values, philosophies, and way of doing business. How can a complex concept like multiculturalism be effectively understood and accepted by a majority of citizens in a given community?

Multiculturalism is not just a topic taught in school, not an equal rights file kept by a social agency, or a festival held by those living in a community from a foreign country. It is the total environment in which there is a spirit of respect and interconnectedness; where individuals and groups feel free to explore differences, needs, and interests in a community of acceptance. Multiculturalism is a community issue. For the true concept of multiculturalism to be understood and accepted, it must be carefully woven into the fabric of the community.

Issues have broad dimension and affect the entire society. They are a set of complex human problems characterized by divergent viewpoints and seemingly conflictive values. They frequently involve conflict and controversy requiring mediation and disputes of contending interests (Dalgaard, 1988). Within the context of the community, the foresightedness and convictions of community leaders, the scope of issues take on unique profiles.

To transform the theoretical constructs (Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner and the feminist perspective) into action in order to affect individuals, families, and communities, some sort of PROCESS is necessary. Although untested, the process suggested in this paper is based on sociological applications of community processes, which have implications for incorporating multiculturalism into a community issue.

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Multiculturalism is a concept requiring careful and often sensitive exploration by teachers, parents, and decision makers. In order to implement programs which encompass respect for individual differences in schools, child care centers, and community functions, teacher activities must extend beyond the classroom to include parents and members of the larger community. To accomplish this, the groundwork must be laid - pro-actively and strategically.

A broadened understanding of multiculturalism coupled with strategies that integrate the expertise of individuals and services of agencies are needed to integrate multiculturalism into a community. This process does not occur in a short amount of time, but must evolve through a collaborative empowerment process. Through collaboration between citizens, community leaders, employers, educators, and decision makers, the process can be mobilized. In order to undertake such a sensitive and complex task, the group leadership must first examine their own personal values, beliefs, experiences, and their personal interpretations of diversity on our society in terms of teaching social and political issues and concerns. This process involves reflective reconstruction of personal and community values and allowing a new meaning to emerge to direct the work of the group.

Community Systems

Multiculturalism involves social interaction and cannot be viewed in isolation. It is a concept which is woven throughout all of the developmental life stages, of all individuals and families, and throughout all of social and political institutions. The ecological framework proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), is a operative approach that can be used to lend understanding and appreciation of the interactions between multicultural community-based systems. This approach provides community organization with a basis with which to examine, understand, and appreciate the interrelationships between individuals and various systems by taking into account individual and altruistic differences as well as diverse ideologies that influence the development of an effective infrastructure.

Application of the Conceptual Framework

Community agencies which see the need to collectively design an infrastructure with "user friendly" support system can facilitate the delivery of integrated services. In developing a community infrastructure, initial cooperation and commitment to the project is necessary. Later this relationship may evolve into truly collaborative partnerships. The first step in this process is to assist individuals in understanding personal values and beliefs. To plan for multicultural initiatives, communities must give careful consideration to a) involving local leadership and local government; b) investing local resources; and c) giving the ownership and control to the people in that community (Flora, Green, Gale, Schmidt & Flora, 1990).

The sociocultural conceptual framework of multiculturalism outlined by the Department of Family and Child Development Multicultural Team at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, synthesizes perspectives of Piaget, Vygotsky, and feminism to provide a basis for critiquing and reconstructing systems. The common elements of conflict and change are represented as well as tools that can be used to reach potential outcomes. Table 1 outlines these conceptual processes. A third column has been added which indicates the structural similarities of the properties of these theories to the process of addressing multiculturalism as a community issue.

The Process of Community Action

To implement a community-based understanding of multiculturalism, there is a process which has proven successful in bringing collective action to bear on an issue. The steps from this process may have initial implications for affecting broad understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Whether the defined community is a geographic region, a preschool, a college campus, or any another group of individuals with common interests, there are several criteria which will assist leaders in determining a community's readiness to affect the understanding and acceptance of multiculturalism. A checklist for use by leadership teams in determining community readiness to address the issue of multiculturalism is presented in Table 2. Dalgaard (1988)

has been used as a resource for identifying these criteria. Without readiness, very important conceptual ideas may go unrecognized, simply because the participants are not ready to embrace the notion and act in a knowledgeable and dynamic manner.

Table 1

Comparison of Conceptual Process for Multiculturalism with Characteristics of an Issue

Properties	Conceptual Perspectives	Issue
Conflict	There is a developmental sequence There is characteristic tension, There is a collaboration of two entities, The conflict involves judgements and power Conflicts demand resolve which may lead to change	Complex, divergent viewpoints, controversial
Change	Changes occur within experience. To affect change, one (or a group) must become a part of the issue. Changes occurs through the reconstruction of society or the community. New knowledge is socially constructed.	There is a need to identify the key leaders and stakeholders involved in the issue. There is a need to devise a multi-disciplinary plan. There is a need to outline components of the issue and have the multi-disciplinary team agree by consensus.
Tools	Reflection, intervention Coping resources, Critique, time, negotiation Environment, Mutual acceptance and respect Power, Politics, Interactions and language, Intersubjectivity, Structures of support.	Audience identification, Development of a multi-disciplinary plan Strategic planning Needs Assessment Definitions
Outcomes	Empowerment, Freedom, Equality, Security, Opportunity, Networks, Coalitions, Dynamic learning, Optimal levels of learning	Change, greater public understanding, acceptance and knowledge base.

Table 2
Criteria for Examining Organizational Readiness to Approach Multiculturalism.

Criteria	Determination of readiness
Do members and key leaders within the organization perceive the organization is in a turbulent environment in need of change relative to multiculturalism?	
Are key leaders dissatisfied with present performance to meet pressing concerns of multicultural education?	
Are top leaders committed to meet the challenge of multicultural education and willing to devote resources to it?	
Can the core interdisciplinary team leadership secure support from other influentials and technical expertise outside of the organization or community?	
Is the organizational leadership willing to examine and adjust the organization consistent with the derived philosophical base of the multiculturalism?	
Does the organization have a climate in which change can be supported - specifically frequent and honest communication?	

Steps in the Community Action Process

Once community readiness for change has been established, there should be several initial meetings between key leaders, educators, and decision makers. This initial established collaboration leads this core organizational body forward with a mutual plan. The following steps can provide a framework to be used to work through multiculturalism as a community issue.

1) The formation of an interdisciplinary multicultural task force or council

Persons or audiences initially interested in promoting multiculturalism should identify key leaders and service representatives to form a council or task force. If the community is defined as a geographic region, planners should not forget to include leadership from the local school division, representatives from the community governing body, media, law enforcement, and other diverse and interested leaders and representatives on the task force.

2) Audience identification

Who are the key stakeholders concerned with multiculturalism? Are they represented on the task force?

3) Personal identification with multiculturalism

Members of the multicultural task force should reflectively explore their own thoughts, feelings, attitudes and concerns regarding diversity. This step may require intense interactions among members, but is a critical step in moving the group forward to grapple with the large issue within the community.

4) Identify the issue of concern

The task force should discuss and outline the key multicultural concerns for

the given community. This should be refined and agreed upon consensus among members of the task force.

5) Define the current community status of multiculturalism and give formal recognition to the efforts of the task force

Once agreement on the focus of multiculturalism in the community has been accomplished, the task force should put the concerns into writing into a brief (1-2 pages) status paper. This is then presented to the local governing body (i.e, preschool board, church board, Board of Supervisors), and service and civic organizations, leadership councils, and media if the larger community is involved. This effort begins to create public awareness. Gaining recognition by the local decision makers is a key step.

6) Planned multi-method public awareness

Following an initial public recognition and endorsement for studying multiculturalism, the task force can more move forward more confidently. Several strategies should be planned for public community events, media efforts, and other appropriate awareness attempts. Events such as a lecture series, community discussion groups and positive news releases building on diversity should take prevail over food festivals, parades, and exclusionary articles.

7) Needs Assessment

Designing a needs assessment with multiculturalism in mind will be a sensitive undertaking. Public awareness has set the scene and created readiness for the public to voice their opinion on this issue. Remembering that divergent viewpoints are characteristic of issues, planners should be cautious in this step. Implementing a formal needs assessment can relay a signal that there is a problem. Using low-key assessment strategies such as community meetings, focus group interviews, or discussions with key leaders to collect baseline attitudinal data may be more appropriate.

8) Development of an action plan

Based on the results of public opinion and community needs assessment, the task force can develop an action plan. This involves developing a mission statement, setting goals, defining objectives, and setting priorities.

9) Time lines

Practically speaking, to activate the plan, planned actions must be delegated to individuals and groups. A time line must be established to be used as a guide for task implementation.

10) Monitoring and planned intermittent and ongoing evaluation

To facilitate effective progress, an evaluation plan must be designed during the initial phases of a project. This involves the identification of evaluation methods, keeping a record of inquiries, plotting time lines against accomplishments. One of the evaluative strategies that can be used is comparing baseline attitudinal data prior to and at the end of the project.

Summary

Most of us live with people like ourselves. We work, play, and worship with people who are like us. Stepping outside of this bubble and into the large arena may make us feel at risk. Attempting to make an impact both inside and outside the classroom is a very large step for most of us. However, in order to provide respect for all people in American society, we must be willing to take risks.

Broad community acceptance of and respect for all persons as individuals is a long range goal. Only by first understanding and becoming comfortable with our own feelings about individual differences can we begin to address the issue in a much broader perspective. Then, as planners and visionaries, we as individuals, can pose questions to key leaders for initial feedback and then we can collectively and collaboratively take action and make a difference.

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Including the Young Child's Emotional Heritage on the Agenda of Multicultural Education

Mary Cherian

When we talk about multicultural education, we often talk about encouraging children to appreciate the diversity within the classroom, to respect differences and to develop positive attitudes towards living in a pluralistic society. In our enthusiasm to foster all that we consider desirable in multiculturalism, we may overlook what is already a part of children's experience of diversity in society. As Dr.Fu has pointed out, every young child is part of a sociocultural environment that extends way beyond the classroom. Consequently, our efforts in the classroom will be inadequate unless we realize what young children experience before and after stepping into the classroom. In addition, even while in our care, what they experience may be very different from what we hoped they would.

That world that extends beyond the classroom subjects many young children to mixed messages about what society values. On the playground, in the classroom or on the way home, a child may be teased, mocked, and laughed at because of her color, her clothes or her accent. There are young children who go home each day either to see an older sibling beaten up in a gang fight or hear him planning one. Parents tell them who to beware of: if they don't already feel it, they are taught fear for the sake of survival. Belonging to a minority group often means having to contend with differential treatment that hurts and the young child is not exempt.

With such experiences come feelings that we sometimes hesitate to talk about: emotions resulting from that sociocultural package that is a child's heritage; emotions such as shame, guilt, hate, fear, anger and bitterness. These are emotions we are not always comfortable discussing. When we do focus on them,

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I find that we tend to treat them as outcomes of easily observable, day-to-day occurrences that can be brushed aside as being very much part of every child's social development: incidents involving sharing a toy with another child, spilling a glass of milk or being separated from a parent when left at the day care center. However, young children do experience these emotions at a different level, too. They are also part of the collective experience of the miniculture that one belongs to. They become part of your emotional heritage when they are linked to your place in society and what happens to you because of it.

Because of this, it is sometimes difficult to identify what the child is feeling and why. There may not be a rational explanation for what one is feeling. Take shame for instance. When you are humiliated by someone, it is you who are likely to feel the shame because that's the very intent of the humiliator. It has little to do with whether you did anything wrong. In addition, children are susceptible to "borrowed shame" (Broucek, 1991) in particular: borrowed from parents and significant others as when a child feels shame belonging to a group that is looked down upon by rest of society. This may include shame for being poor, having illiterate parents, having parents who do not speak English or who dress differently. There can be feelings of shame when you are taught that cleanliness is good but you have a physical impairment causing you to drool all the time.

Guilt is no less complex. You can feel guilt because of what your ancestors did to other people. Depending on how it is presented, the history of this country (in terms of what was done to the Native Americans, and the African Americans in particular) can plant seeds of guilt in European American children for what their people did to others (Kincheloe, 1991).

On the other hand, you can also feel guilt for what others have to do for you. When they interviewed children with severe disabilities, Tackett, Kerr & Helmstadter (1990) found that some of the children reported being distressed about the degree to which others had to help them with physical activities.

These and, in fact, all emotions can be attributed to a large variety of causes and the list could go on and on. These are not simple emotions. We should not think there are simple, ready-made solutions either. For instance, many people believe hate and fear are the outcomes of ignorance (Sulzbach, 1990). I believe there is more to it than that - take ignorance away and neither hate nor fear

disappear. Similarly, we often think of shame as the other extreme of pride but they are not bipolar: you can be full of pride and shame at the same time. As for guilt, it is so often disguised so well that we may even fail to detect it in ourselves. Furthermore, all these emotions can be experienced at the same time as, for instance, love, hope and courage.

Therefore, the teacher or caregiver may not be able to place a finger on the actual mix of emotions being experienced by a child. That does not have to get in the way of developing a curriculum that addresses young children's emotions. I truly believe there are steps that can be taken - however incremental they may be - to help the young child make sense of such an emotional heritage. First and foremost, I propose that those who plan early childhood curricula need to experience a conceptual shift that moves us beyond seeing a curriculum as purely educational in intent. A curriculum can be therapeutic, too (Edgerton, 1991).

Planning therapeutic opportunities for young children does not in any way have to be at the expense of educational ones. Instead, I see them as complementing each other. Both are part of the discovery process: about the self, others and living with both in a culturally diverse society.

Drawing on my own experiences as a psychotherapist, as a preschool teacher, and as a child who belonged to a minority group, I share the following suggestions:

1. Working Through Emotions

We should provide opportunities for young children to work through their emotions. Think back for a moment and you'll probably be able to remember many occasions when experienced teachers have observed that certain activities seem to be therapeutic for the children. A child is pounding furiously on a lump of clay and the adult recognizes that the child is working through strong emotions. In other words, the very same materials we already provide in developmentally appropriate early childhood programs can be used in therapeutic ways. Open-ended materials such as play dough, clay, water, sand and free art are ideal. Those who work with young children need to be aware of this and also be guided by conscious, intentional planning when laying out the materials and being there with the child.

2. Words for Feelings

There is nothing quite like discovering that there is a word for what one is feeling. Having a word for it legitimizes it, makes it communicable to others and implies that you are not alone in experiencing that feeling. Therefore, we ought to provide children with the language - the words that can be connected to what is being experienced - by using those words ourselves. There are many ways in which this can be done without having to confront a child with what you, the adult, decides she is feeling. Instead, we can use stories that mention emotions, chat about them in casual conversations, have developmentally appropriate group discussions about emotions and so on.

3. Coping Strategies

We can do little to take away the painful experiences a child may have to encounter because of who he is. We can, however, do a great deal to help the child develop coping strategies. In the case of young children, I believe a first step should be to transmit the message that there are different ways of reacting to one's own feelings - knowing there are options to choose from is liberating and empowering in itself.

If a child is not ready or willing to talk about what is being felt, she should not feel compelled to. Instead, puppets, free art and the open-ended materials mentioned earlier can be used to work through painful emotions. In the therapeutic curriculum, autobiography - both reading others' as well as writing or narrating one's own - can be a central method through which the child can try to understand and articulate the pain felt (Edgerton, 1991). Storytelling can be a powerful tool regardless of whether the stories are true to life or fantastical.

4. Reenacting History

The past is a rich resource that we can use to help us understand ourselves as well as those with whom we must deal with but to do this, we have to go beyond seeing the past as a collection of great stories (Brady, 1980). We have to think of creative and sensitive ways to rewrite history without bending the truth.

For instance, conventional accounts of American history tend to stress individualism as a very positive value. Rugged individualism, it is believed, conquered the frontier, established the nation and made America what it is today. The emphasis on individualism obscures the fact that all this was achieved as much through collective, cooperative efforts from the start (Brady, 1989). The children with physical disabilities who reported feeling guilty because of what others had to do for them could benefit immensely by knowing that interdependence had as much to do with our country's successes as rugged individualism did.

One of my personal favorites is the story of Rosa Parks. When I present it to young children, I like to include a participative component. The children are invited to join in the rally that protested the racist laws: we know there were Whites who supported the movement and however few they may have been, they open up the opportunity for the White children in the group to be involved on the "right" side for a change.

5. Adult Support

These suggestions call for adult involvement that is sensitive to the needs of the child even when the adult may not fully understand what the child is experiencing. They call for the kind of responsive teaching that Dr. Stremmel talked about. I am not suggesting teachers become therapists but rather that teachers see this as part of their nurturing as well as educative role.

All this has implications for teacher education and research. Conceptualizing an educational-therapeutic philosophy of curriculum development for young children challenges conventional ideas about the role of preschool education itself. Including the young child's emotional heritage on the agenda of multicultural education means stretching its scope and potential to include domains we know very little about. We also need research from an early childhood education perspective on the more painful emotional experiences children have in a multicultural society. Only then can we attempt to soothe the hurts and heal the wounds caused by the difficulties we have had - and continue to have - with diversity.

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Multicultural Education in Any Classroom

T.J. Stone

Multicultural education in the early years is an issue of growing concern--as evidenced by its concentration in conferences such as this one. As teachers exchange strategies for incorporating the diversities that make up today's classroom, another question emerges: "What if my classroom is not "multi-ethnic" or does not appear to be multicultural?" If the differences are not overt, how do we teach children about diversity?

All classrooms are multicultural. All children deserve the opportunity to learn to appreciate differences. Year after year I teach 14 white, middle-class, able-bodied children from heterosexual households. Such children cannot be omitted from multicultural education simply because they appear to be homogeneous. They will not understand the variety of cultures outside our classroom before they can "see" the variety within it. Variety exists in spite of same-race, same-culture appearances. And it must be seen and celebrated. This notion of "seeing" is the focus of my discussion. I refer to "seeing" not with the eyes, but with the mind. If young children create a window through which to look that recognizes and celebrates differences, then they can take this perspective, this way of living, looking, and seeing with them in and out of the classroom.

Now, how may we, as teachers and "guiders," facilitate the window building? I would like to discuss some techniques and then perhaps later we can exchange ideas. In general, I am considering children ages two or three and up. My classroom and examples reflect 6-year-olds. Creating the window is about developing ways to question, critique, and know. We can model this behavior through nonverbal gestures, verbal statements and questions, and concrete examples. Children can understand the concept of multiculturalism and question the "isms's" when presented initially with concrete and immediate situations.

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Some examples of things to "see" include gender, learning styles, family structures, height, weight, and age. Variety among these examples does exist in our classrooms.

Gender is usually an immediate arena within which to discuss differences. Being male or being female in our society is to be of different cultures. There are different societal rules and role models for boys and girls. The power inequities are overt enough for young children to readily recognize. Think for a moment about the major characters in the books you read in your classroom. You probably have to make an extra effort to maintain a gender-balanced collection of reading materials in your room. Children can understand and are quite fascinated by the term "stereotyping." As you look at gender messages available to children you will notice that boys are depicted as superior, active, directive, and aggressive. Girls are depicted as weaker, wishful, and less valued. Children notice this difference, too. They play the game, "let's play stereotyping." Recognizing sexism is part of the window creation. They will naturally apply similar questions and concerns to race, age, culture, size, and so on if it is modeled for them.

Ways to bring in areas that are not immediate in the classroom include:

1. Novel reading
2. Brainstorming
3. Teachable moments
4. Role playing
5. Positive reinforcement of diversity and cooperation
6. Circle time
7. Current events
8. Teacher as example
9. Family traditions

Multicultural education must be more than a monthly focus. It is a way of seeing--of seeing our differences and similarities. Perhaps a few questions should always be asked as a way of "seeing" in any situation: "I wonder how that person, animal, or "thing" feels?" "How would I feel if I were that person?" "What is that person thinking about me?" "I want to ..."

In working with children to create ways of accepting difference, we empower young people to respond to their internal notions of basic fairness. We encourage them to embrace their differences with their similarities. Perhaps,

these will be the children, and later adults, who recognize oppression even when they are the ones being privileged. Ultimately we join our children in creating change.

Reflections on Multicultural Education

Janet K. Sawyers

My career in early childhood education began in the late 1960's. My first experiences of working were with summer Head Start programs in Kansas City, Missouri. I taught kindergarten in the Shawnee mission of the Kansas School district. At that time, the school district was sending 95% of its high school graduates on to college. During the next five years, my cultural awareness and education was greatly expanded by teaching kindergarten and first grade on military bases in Okinawa, Italy, and Germany. More recently, I have taught in and directed a university preschool program.

I have experienced the unique challenges in providing multicultural education in what might be called homogenous classrooms --That is those in which similarities between children predominate over differences; as well as those presented in heterogenous classrooms -- those in which differences among the children predominate over their similarities.

I have seen and have been a part of multicultural education programs for the culturally deprived or culturally disadvantaged. Like others, I am horrified that I could have ever referred to or thought of a child as culturally deprived. The list of good intentions and misguided perspectives goes on. I have had my values clarified and my consciousness raised through workshops and classes on various ethnic groups and non-sexist curriculum. I have participated in and contributed to curriculums which revolved around a month devoted to the history, art, etc. of various racial or ethnic groups. I have seen the pendulum swing from the integration of schools, to the current call for segregated classrooms of schools for Black males. I have also witnessed the movement which provided for bilingual education evolving into the current day legal challenges which assert that such efforts have harmed rather that helped children.

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My participation in the Virginia Tech Multicultural Group has once again challenged me to think about my current practices and beliefs. I am still struggling with what is the best practice in regard to multicultural education - just what is in the best interest of the children and the families I work with, and the student teachers I am training.

Some of the questions that remain for me include the following:

- What are the relevant aspects of the various groups or cultures to which the children in my classroom belong? That is, what is it that is most important to the child in being male or female, Black, or Hispanic for example?

- At what ages do children identify with these groups and begin to categorize others by these groupings? Are these group identifications helpful or harmful?

- Are differences between cultural groups stronger or greater than differences within cultural groups? Or does the best practice boil down being sensitive to individual differences in order to help children appreciate and respect diversity?

- Is there an optimal balance between introducing diversity, that is pointing out differences between people on one hand, and identifying similarities which people share on the other hand?

- Where do we go for good information, materials, equipment, and toys that provide a developmentally appropriate multicultural experience for children?

- How do I avoid creating conflicts for the child whose cultural beliefs and practices are difference than those practiced in the classroom?
For example, the child who is encouraged to use his words at school to express anger but is reprimanded at home for talking back to his parents; or the child who is told "no gun play at school because guns can hurt people," but at home shared an interest in guns with a father who was an avid collector and hunter?

- How do I best help parents from different cultures to understand child development and parenting given that the theories, principles, and research with which I am familiar is based on Western culture?

I don't have the answers to many of these questions yet, but it is my hope that the model we are presenting will provide the framework to guide the research we need to answer these questions which guide our practice with young children and the training of future teachers.

Nobody Said It Would Be Easy !!!

Ann J. Francis

I am going to tell you a couple of stories. The first one is from a book that has just recently become controversial because of some question as to its authorship. I read the book a couple of months ago, and decided to use this passage as an illustration of the consequences of a clash of cultural understanding (or misunderstanding) between a teacher and a student. Then it came out in the news that the author of the book, The Education of Little Tree, may not be who we thought it was. I decided to read the passage anyway, because I think that this is an excellent book. The controversy has not changed the fact that for the last 12 years, people have thought this was an excellent book. So authorship notwithstanding, here is the story and the passage:

> The year is 1930. A young Cherokee boy is taken in by his grandparents after the death of his parents. His grandparents, also of Cherokee descent, live in the mountains of North Carolina and practice traditional Indian ways. His grandfather has great pride in the fact that he makes the best whiskey in the county. The situation is called to the attention of the child welfare authorities, who remove the child, named "Little Tree" from his grandparents and send him to live and go to school in an orphanage.

Passage from The Education of Little Tree, pp 190-192.

The second story I want to tell you is one that I made up about a brand new teacher named Susan and her experiences in a public school system, trying to implement all of the things she has learned about multicultural education.

The year is 1990. Susan has just begun her first year as a kindergarten teacher after graduation in early childhood education from a state university in a large metropolitan area (I'll leave it to your imagination to choose the area).

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She has a widely diverse classroom, including children ranging in age from 4-almost 5 to 6 years old. Her children come from African-American, White, Hispanic, and Native American families. She has about 60% girls and 40% boys. Her school system has just begun a systems change project in which children with disabilities are integrated into regular classrooms, so she has a 5 year old with Down Syndrome and a 6 year old who is hearing impaired.

Susan is enthusiastic about her new challenges. She has read NAEYC's anti-bias curriculum. She has attended workshops on multicultural education. She knows all of the politically correct language to use. She has books and dolls in her classroom relating to the various cultures and disabilities. She even learned to speak Spanish during her college years, so is pleased to be able to communicate with Maria, her almost-5 year old Hispanic child who speaks very little English.

She has designed her curriculum to provide lots of hands-on multi-sensory experiences so that the children can learn from a variety of developmentally appropriate activities.

One day, as she is telling Maria, in Spanish and English, about the plans for the next activity, the principal walks by. "Susan", he says, "aren't you aware that our school board adopted a policy that all children are to speak only English in our classrooms?" "I had heard something about that," she replies, "but if I did that, Maria would not understand what I was saying!" "You know how sensitive people in this community are about illegal Mexican aliens coming in and taking people's jobs," the principal says. "They are serious about the belief that all children who benefit from our school system must speak our language, and that we should not cater to these Hispanic children in the classroom, so I must insist that you follow the policy."

A little discouraged, but none-the-less determined to rise to this challenge, Susan begins to try to communicate with Maria in English, using gestures and pointing to where she is to go. A puzzled Maria slowly walks in the direction the teacher is pointing.

The next day, Susan is reading the children a halloween story about ghosts, goblins, and witches. Bubba, a 6 year old boy, asks the teacher a question about witches. Susan sees an opportunity for discussion, so stops the story for a

moment and has a discussion about witches and halloween with the children. The next day, Susan is called to the office. It seems that Bubba went home and told his family about the discussion about witches and the family has brought suit against the school system for teaching devil worship. A clear violation of the constitutional principal of separation of church and state.

Susan, a little more discouraged, but not totally defeated, decides that she will just learn from experience and be a little more careful about what she teaches.

Susan has, for some time, wanted to try working with computers with her children. She sees a special application for the two children with disabilities in her class. She requests the purchase of the computers and is told that there is no money. She has already had to scrounge supplies for her class, and the building and playground need repair, as well. She is especially frustrated because her friend, Theresa, who teaches in a school in a well-to-do, mostly white section of town has more supplies and equipment than she can use.

The next week, Susan overhears two children talking about differences in their bodies. They are discussing why one is circumcised and the other is not. They begin to pass along some incorrect information, so Susan decides to come sit with them. They recount their story to her and she gives them some facts and explanations. They ask her if she has been circumcised, and she explains the difference between girls and boys in very simple terms to them. Another teacher just happens to be walking by and reports to the principal that Susan is teaching sex education. Since the state legislature has just rejected the family life education program that was proposed, and the county school board ruled that sex education has no place in the schools, Susan is again called to the office.

As we begin the 1991 school year, we find Susan selling computers in East Hoboken, New Jersey.

You have heard today how to provide a multicultural education for young children in the classroom. The point of all this is that politics on all levels has and probably will always affect the care and education of young children. Funding streams, regulations, attitudes of parents, school boards, school administrators and child care directors, all dictate policy.

Bronfenbrenner reminds us that we cannot and should not live in a vacuum,

and that everything we do is affected by forces outside our classroom, as well as inside. We, as teachers of young children, must look at not only how we can develop our curriculum to provide a true multicultural education in the classroom, but how we can empower ourselves to effect change on all levels. We must become involved with advocacy for multicultural approaches to education in the legislature, on the school board, the PTA, and the school administrations, as well as with the boards and directors of child care centers. We must educate not only our children, but our society about the importance of these things.

This, of course is easy to say, but raises some compelling questions. How can we work with our children to help develop some social responsibility and interest in becoming involved and active when they see injustice? Should this be a responsibility of the schools or should this be left to the parents? How can teachers be politically active when pressure from school administrations and school boards often forces them to stay quiet and not take a public stand on an issue?

There are two levels of activism on which a teacher can work. The first level is activism with the children. This does not require taking a stand on an issue, but it involves helping the children feel good enough about themselves so that they feel empowered to fight prejudice and injustice when they are the victims. It also involves helping children develop empathy and respect for diversity so that they can actively respond when others are victims of discrimination. Giving children permission to express their own feelings, encouraging them to speak out when they feel anger or hurt (using words, not fists), and encouraging the children to discuss their conflicts and try to reach a resolution that is acceptable to both parties, are ways to accomplish these goals.

Children can be encouraged to become active as a group, as well, adopting specific goals for their activism, such as cleaning up a playground, advocating for more adaptive equipment for a school where a child with disabilities is enrolled, or even advocating for the purchase of dolls, books or materials on a particular topic or about a particular ethnic group that is represented in the classroom, but not in the materials. The children can write letters (dictated to the teacher) to town councils, toy manufacturers, and school boards requesting the changes or additions they want. This teaches them that they do have the power to act on behalf of a cause or goal. Successes in their efforts only reinforce this

understanding of empowerment.

The other level of activism on which a teacher can work is on the professional level. Teachers can serve as advocates for policies that are good for children. We can work to ensure adoption of policies that recognize diversity and discourage prejudice and discrimination. Even though we may not feel that we have the power to make change as an individual, there is power in numbers. We must not operate in isolation, but must join professional organizations and speak out about what is right and developmentally appropriate for the children. We must learn to be sensitive to the needs of the variety of people in our society, but we must at the same time, respect the rights of those with differing points of view to express their views. We must help our administrators on college campuses and in public schools understand that people should be allowed to express their opinions, but that extreme opinions should be balanced with simultaneous presentation of the other side, not banned because they are controversial. We must try to find common ground with those who disagree with us. We must build coalitions and find ways to work together to achieve the desired results. We must be teachers to society, as well as teachers and models for our children...We must get involved.